

OPINIONS AND DECLARATIONS RENDERED BY THE INTER- NATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

Edited by

FRANCIS HEMMING, C.M.G., C.B.E.

Secretary to the Commission

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OPINION 265

Validation, under the Plenary Powers, of the specific names *aristolochiae* Fabricius, 1775, as published in the combination *Papilio aristolochiae* and *ascanius* Cramer [1775], as published in the combination *Papilio ascanius* (Class Insecta, Order Lepidoptera)

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INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

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- Professor Robert L. USINGER (*University of California, Berkeley, California, U.S.A.*).

OPINION 265

VALIDATION, UNDER THE PLENARY POWERS, OF THE
SPECIFIC NAMES "ARISTOLOCHIAE" FABRICIUS,
1775, AS PUBLISHED IN THE COMBINATION
"PAPILIO ARISTOLOCHIAE" AND
"ASCANIUS" CRAMER [1775], AS
PUBLISHED IN THE COMBINA-
TION "PAPILIO ASCANIUS"
(CLASS INSECTA, ORDER
LEPIDOPTERA)

RULING :—(1) Under the Plenary Powers, the under-mentioned specific names (Class Insecta, Order Lepidoptera) are hereby suppressed for the purposes both of the Law of Priority and of the Law of Homonymy :—(a) the name *ascanius* Linnaeus, 1768, as published in the combination *Papilio ascanius* ; (b) the name *aristolochiae* Pallas, as used by that author in the combination *Papilio aristolochiae* on any date prior to the publication in 1775 of the name *aristolochiae* Fabricius in the same combination.

(2) The specific names suppressed under the Plenary Powers in (1) above are hereby placed on the *Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology* as Names Nos. 21 and 22.

(3) The undermentioned specific names are hereby placed on the *Official List of Specific Names in Zoology* as Names Nos. 80 and 81 :—(a) the name *ascanius* Cramer [1775] as published in the combination *Papilio ascanius* ; (b) the name *aristolochiae* Fabricius, 1775, as published in the combination *Papilio aristolochiae*.

I.—THE STATEMENT OF THE CASE

In the early part of the year 1945 Dr. A. Steven Corbet (*British Museum (Natural History), London*) recalled to Mr. Francis Hemming, Secretary to the International Commission, that in 1941 he had published a suggestion (Corbet, 1941, *Proc. R. ent. Soc. Lond.* (B) 10 : 27) that an application should be submitted to the International Commission asking for the use of the Plenary

Powers to suppress the specific name *ascanius* Linnaeus, 1768, as published in the combination *Papilio ascanius*, a long-overlooked name recently brought to light by Dr. Corbet's survey of the writings of Linnaeus which, if re-introduced, would lead to the sinking in synonymy of the name *aristolochiae* Fabricius, 1775, as published in the combination *Papilio aristolochiae*, and to the rejection, as a junior homonym, of the name *ascanius* Cramer, 1775, as published in the combination *Papilio ascanius*. Dr. Corbet took the view that both these results would be highly objectionable, especially the former, having regard to the fact that either in its Latin form or in some vernacular form the name *aristolochiae* had been widely used to denote an important section of the genus *Papilio* Linnaeus, 1758, *sensu lat.*, a usage which would quickly become unintelligible if the name *aristolochiae* Fabricius were to be discarded as a junior (subjective) synonym. Dr. Corbet added that, now that the Commission was in a position to deal with new applications, he proposed formally to submit this case. In informing Dr. Corbet of his support for the submission to the International Commission of an application on the foregoing lines, Mr. Hemming added that, as lepidopterist, he hoped that Dr. Corbet would widen his application somewhat, in order to include a proposal that the Commission should suppress a usage of the name *aristolochiae* in the combination *Papilio aristolochiae* which it was known had been made by Pallas on some date prior to 1780 in a work which it had been impossible to trace; a lengthy description by Pallas of his *Papilio aristolochiae* had been quoted by Esper in 1780 and it might well be that that name had been published by Pallas before the appearance in print of the name *Papilio aristolochiae* Fabricius, 1775, the name which it was Dr. Corbet's principal object to preserve. Mr. Hemming therefore suggested that he should include in his application to the Commission a request that the name *aristolochiae* as used by Pallas in the combination *Papilio aristolochiae* on some date prior to 1780 should be suppressed under the Plenary Powers. Dr. Corbet agreed to expand his application in this way, and on 26th March 1945 he submitted the following letter enclosing the draft of his projected application to the Commission. Dr. Corbet had not supplied the substantive application at the time of his premature death, and accordingly the document furnished by him in 1945 was adopted by the Commission as constituting the "Statement of the Case" in

relation to the names discussed above. Dr. Corbet's letter and enclosure were as follows :—

Proposed use of the Plenary Powers to validate the names “*Papilio aristolochiae*” Fabricius, 1775, and “*Papilio ascanius*” Cramer [1775]

(a) Letter, dated 26th March 1945 from Dr. A. Steven Corbet to Mr. Francis Hemming

Enclosed is a draft of my proposed application to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature for suspension of the Rules in order to invalidate the names *Papilio ascanius* Linnaeus, 1768, and *Papilio aristolochiae* Pallas.

(b) Enclosure to Dr. A. Steven Corbet's letter of 26th March 1945

1. *Papilio ascanius* Linnaeus, 1768

Papilio ascanius (Eques) Linnaeus, 1768, *Iter in Chinam* : 7, 8 (note d ; Hab. in Insula Nieuw Bay [Java]).

This name was applied by Linnaeus to a butterfly taken by Anders Sparrman in Java during his voyage to China in 1765. The insect remained unidentified until recently when the opinion was expressed (Corbet, 1941, *Proc. R. ent. Soc. Lond. (B)* 10 : 25) that the name applies to the form *antiphus* Fabricius of *Atrophaneura aristolochiae* (Fabricius). The Sumatran race of the species is of this form, which also occurs occasionally in west Java, according to material in the British Museum.

2. *Papilio aristolochiae* Fabricius, 1775

Papilio aristolochiae Fabricius, 1775, *Syst. Ent.* : 443; “Hab. in Aristolochiis Indiae Orientalis”.

It is generally considered that Fabricius's name was based on an Indian example of the common and widely distributed species of *Atrophaneura* to which it is currently applied. The name of *aristolochiae*, however, was not consistently applied to this species for, in the first half of the last century, it was incorrectly known as *P. polydorus* and later it passed under the name of *P. diphilus* Esper, which is now regarded as a synonym of *aristolochiae*. Butler re-established the Fabrician name for the species in 1869 and this name has been universally used for the collective species ever since.

3. *Papilio ascanius* Cramer [1775]

Papilio ascanius Cramer, 1775, *Uitlandsche Kapellen*, 1 : 20, pl. xiv, fig. A ; Brazil, Rio de Janeiro.

Although Cramer made no mention of the Linnean name *ascanius* there can be little doubt that he was aware of it, for the South American species to which he allotted the name bears a superficial resemblance to the Oriental species described as *P. ascanius* by Linnaeus and as *P. aristolochiae* by Fabricius. Cramer's species, which is now known

as *Battus ascanius* ([Cramer]), appears to be confined to the neighbourhood of Rio de Janeiro and has been known by no other trivial name than that which Cramer applied to it.

4. *Papilio aristolochiae* Esper [1780].

Papilio aristolochiae Esper [1780], *Die Schmetterlinge*, 1 (Bd. 2) (*Forts. Tag-schmett.*) : 19 ; Südlich Russland.

In his description of *Zerynthia rumina* (Esper *nec* Linnaeus), for which the oldest valid name appears to be *Z. hypermnestra* Scopoli, 1763, Esper commented on the appropriateness of Pallas's name *Papilio aristolochiae* for the species, since the larva feeds on Aristolochia. From Esper's remarks, it might appear that Pallas had previously published this name, but a search through his *Reise Prov. Russ. Reichs.* has not revealed any clue. For the present, therefore, the name must be attributed to Esper.

The name *aristolochiae* has not been employed consistently for any of the *Zerynthia* species and it would be unfortunate if it had to be brought into use following the discovery of its publication by Pallas before 1775.

5. A strict application of the laws of priority to these two pairs of homonyms would necessitate the following changes in nomenclature.

(i) *Atrophaneura ascanius* (Linnaeus, 1758) would replace *Atrophaneura aristolochiae* (Fabricius, 1775) as the oldest valid name for the widely distributed oriental species at present known under the latter name.

(ii) A new name would be required for the South American species of *Battus* which has been known under the trivial name of *ascanius* [Cramer], 1775, for over a century and a half.

(iii) If a name *Papilio aristolochiae* Pallas came to light with a date of publication prior to 1775 it would invalidate the Fabrician name and this latter name would not be available for use even as a sub-specific name. If Pallas's name appeared before 1763, it would invalidate Scopoli's name of *hypermnestra* for the *Zerynthia* species.

6. It must be conceded that a strict application of the law of priority would have a most unfortunate effect on the nomenclature of two, or possibly three, well-known species of PAPILIONIDAE. The transference of the name *ascanius* from the South American species of *Battus* to the common Oriental species of *Atrophaneura* which is widely known as *aristolochiae* would upset the nomenclature of two important species which have been known by these names for a long time and of which the latter species has an extensive literature.

The resuscitation of Pallas's name *aristolochiae* (if such were found), for the *Zerynthia* species now known as *hypermnestra* Scopoli would not only lead to confusion in the literature of this species but would involve changing the name of the Oriental *Atrophaneura* species,

assuming that this had not been done in consequence of the identification of the Linnean name *ascanius*.

In my opinion, these devastating changes in nomenclature resulting from the identification of Linnaeus's *ascanius* and the discovery that Pallas used the name *aristolochiae* for a species of *Zerynthia* are not only unwarranted but may well have the effect of bringing zoological nomenclature to ridicule; certainly they would create "greater confusion than uniformity".

7. I, accordingly, on the basis of the evidence submitted, apply to the International Commission of Zoological Nomenclature:

- (1) To suspend the rules in the case of *Papilio ascanius* Linnaeus, 1768, and to reject the name permanently.
- (2) To suspend the rules in the case of *Papilio aristolochiae* Pallas, if this name should subsequently be found in the literature, and to reject the name permanently.

II.—HISTORY OF THE PRESENT CASE PRIOR TO THE RECEIPT OF DR. CORBET'S APPLICATION

2. As has already been explained, one aspect of the proposal submitted by Dr. Corbet had been considered by Mr. Hemming, as a lepidopterist, before the outbreak of war in 1939. The following is a note on this subject prepared by Mr. Hemming on 28th July 1936, shortly before he was elected Secretary to the International Commission:—

The problem created by the use of the name "Papilio aristolochiae" by Pallas on some date prior to 1780 for the Zerynthiid species formerly generally known as "Thais polyxena" [Schiffermüller & Denis], 1775

By FRANCIS HEMMING (*London*)

The common South European Zerynthiid species formerly known as *Thais polyxena* ([Schiffermüller & Denis], 1775), and now referred to the genus *Zerynthia* Ochseneimer, 1816, presents a nomenclatorial tangle which at present is quite insoluble.

2. This species was universally known as *Thais polyxena* ([Schiffermüller & Denis], 1775) (*Ankündigung syst. Werk. Schmett. wien. Gegend*: 162, no. C.1) until about 1908, although it was usually dated "1776" and attributed to the version of the same authors' work published in the latter year in an edition differing from that of 1775 only in its title (*Verzeichniss der Schmetterlinge der Wiener Gegend*).

3. In 1908, however, Verity proposed (1908, *Rhop. pal.* : 31) the re-introduction for this species of the trivial name *hypermnestra* Scopoli, 1763 (*Papilio hypermnestra* Scopoli, 1763, *Ent. carn.* : 149) and this suggestion won a fair measure of acceptance. This usage was, however, incorrect, for the name *Papilio hypermnestra* Scopoli, 1763, was an invalid junior homonym of an identical name published for an entirely different species somewhat earlier in the same year, namely *Papilio hypermnestra* Linnaeus, 1763 (*Amoen. acad.* 6 : 407). As soon as it was realised that the name *hypermnestra* Scopoli was not available, a fresh hunt was made for a name for this species. The name next brought forward was *hypsipyle* Fabricius, 1777 (*Papilio hypsipyle* Fabricius, 1777, *Gen. Ins.* : 265). In 1934 (*Stylops* 3 : 196), I accepted this name, but pointed out that it had been published by Schulze a year before it was published by Fabricius, and therefore that it should be known as *Zerynthia hypsipyle* (Schulze, 1776) (*Papilio hypsipyle* Schulze, 1776, *Naturforscher* 9 : 221 *et nota*). The nominal species so established by Schulze is objectively identical with the nominal species *Papilio hypermnestra* Scopoli, 1763, Schulze having stated that his new name was a *nom. nov.* for Scopoli's *hypermnestra*.

4. In the course of the survey of the old literature on which I am at present engaged for the purpose of detecting all the names published for the Palaearctic butterflies—and, so far as possible, securing the suppression, by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, of any of these old names, the resurrection of which would give rise to serious confusion—I have come across a hitherto unsuspected difficulty in connection with the name to be used for the present species. For I find that in Band 2 of the first *Theil* of the *Fortsetzung der europäischen Schmetterlinge* Esper, when discussing the present species under the name *P. N. Ph. Rumina* (the use of this name being a misidentification of the entirely different species *Papilio rumina* Linnaeus, 1758, *Syst. Nat.* (ed. 10) 1 : 480), quotes a long description of what is undoubtedly this species written by Pallas under the name *Papilio aristolochiae*. The specimens on which Pallas's description was based were obtained from Southern Russia. Esper gave no reference from which to trace this long and important quotation from Pallas. The only contemporary author who appears to have noted the name *Papilio aristolochiae* Pallas was Borkhausen (1788, *Naturgesch. eur. Schmett.* 1 : 23, 113 ; 1789, *ibid.* 2 : 212), but he also gave no bibliographical reference to the passage in Pallas concerned, his knowledge of this name being evidently mainly, if not entirely, derivative from the passage in Esper referred to above. It is possible that the long passage—extending to over one full page of Esper's work—may be no more than a transcript from a lengthy communication received by Esper from Pallas, but the description is so detailed that this is most improbable. In view of the locality in which were obtained the specimens on which Pallas stated that he based the description of his *Papilio aristolochiae*, it is much more likely that the passage in question appeared somewhere in the massive volumes of Pallas's *Reise durch verschiedene Provinzen des Russischen*

Reichs. published in the period 1771—1776. Both Dr. C. D. Sherborn and myself have spent long hours in searching the three volumes of the foregoing work, but we have entirely failed to find any usage therein of the name *Papilio aristolochiae* Pallas.

5. The situation disclosed above is extraordinarily unsatisfactory, not only because it leaves completely in doubt what is the oldest available name for the Zerynthiid here under consideration, but also—and, viewed from a more general standpoint, particularly—because of the possibility that Pallas may have published for this species a name consisting of the combination *Papilio aristolochiae* prior to the publication of the name *Papilio aristolochiae* Fabricius, 1775 (*Syst. Ent.* : 443). The disappearance, as a junior homonym, of the latter name would be a most serious matter, having regard to the fact that either in its Latin form or some vernacular adaptation that name has given its currently adopted title to one of the most characteristic Sections of the genus *Papilio* Linnaeus, 1758, as broadly conceived, and has become the centre around which a large literature has accumulated.

6. In view of the considerations set out above, it is essential from the point of view of the nomenclature of the West Palaearctic butterflies that an end should be put to the present irremediable uncertainty as to the name to be applied to the Zerynthiid formerly known as *Thais polyxena* ([Schifferrmüller & Denis], 1775), by the suppression, by the International Commission, under its Plenary Powers, of the mystery name—perhaps no more than a cheironym—*aristolochiae* as used by Pallas in the combination *Papilio aristolochiae*. The same action is absolutely essential also in order to prevent the most serious confusion in the nomenclature of the largest single group—the genus *Papilio* Linnaeus, 1758, as formerly understood—in the family PAPILIONIDAE.

III.—THE SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF THE CASE

3. On receipt of Dr. Corbet's letter of 26th March 1945, the problem dealt with in the present *Opinion* was given the Registered Number Z.N.(S.) 186. Mr. Hemming thereupon consulted Mr. N. D. Riley (*Keeper, Department of Entomology, British Museum (Natural History), London*), with whom before the war he had discussed the aspect of this case raised by the discovery of the existence of the name *Papilio aristolochiae* Pallas. On 15th May 1945 Mr. Riley informed Mr. Hemming that he was in agreement with the action proposed by Dr. Corbet; Mr. Riley added that great confusion would result if the name *aristolochiae* Fabricius, 1775, had to be discarded for the species of *Papilio* to which it was universally applied.

4. *Issue of Public Notices* : On 14th November 1947 a notice of the possible use by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature of its Plenary Powers for the purpose of validating the specific name *aristolochiae* Fabricius, 1775, as published in the combination *Papilio aristolochiae*, was sent to the serial publications prescribed by the Ninth International Congress of Zoology, Monaco, 1913. The publication of this notice elicited no objection to the action proposed.

IV.—THE DECISION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

5. The present application was considered by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature at the Fourteenth Meeting of its Paris Session held at the Sorbonne in the Amphithéâtre Louis-Liard on Monday, 26th July 1948 at 2030 hours. The following is an extract from the Official Record of the Proceedings of the International Commission, setting out the decision taken by it in the present case at the foregoing meeting (Paris Session, 14th Meeting, Conclusion 40) (1950, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 4 : 542—545) :—

THE COMMISSION agreed :—

(1) to use their Plenary Powers :—

- (a) to suppress the trivial name *ascanius* Linnaeus, 1768, as published in the binominal combination *Papilio ascanius* ;
- (b) in so far as such use might be necessary, to suppress the trivial name *aristolochiae* Pallas, as published in the binominal combination *Papilio aristolochiae*, prior to the publication by Esper in [1780] of an extract, containing this name, from some work by Pallas ;

(c) to validate the under-mentioned trivial names :—

aristolochiae Fabricius, 1775, as published in the binominal combination *Papilio aristolochiae*,
ascanius Cramer [1775], as published in the binominal combination *Papilio ascanius* ;

- (2) to place on the *Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Trivial Names in Zoology* the trivial names specified in (1)(a) and (1)(b) above ;
- (3) to place on the *Official List of Specific Trivial Names in Zoology* the trivial names specified in (1)(c) above ;
- (4) to render an *Opinion* recording the decisions specified in (1) to (3) above.

6. The following are the original references for the names which appear in the decision set out in the immediately preceding paragraph :—

aristolochiae, *Papilio*, Fabricius, 1775, *Syst. Ent.* : 443

ascanius, *Papilio*, Linnaeus, 1768, *Dissert. acad. sistens in Iter in Chinam* : 7, 8 (*nota d*)

ascanius, *Papilio*, Cramer, 1775, *Uitl. Kapellen* 1 (2) : 20, pl. 14, fig. A

7. The decision taken in the present case was reported to, and approved by, the Section on Nomenclature of the Thirteenth International Congress of Zoology, Paris, 1948, at its Sixth Meeting held on Monday, 26th July 1948 (1950, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 5 : 118).

8. The Ruling given in the present *Opinion* was concurred in by the sixteen (16) Commissioners and Alternate Commissioners present at the Paris Session of the International Commission, namely :—

Beltrán *vice* Cabrera ; Boschma ; Bradley ; di Caporiacco ; Hemming ; Hindle *vice* Jordan ; Jorge *vice* do Amaral ; Kirby *vice* Stoll ; Lemche *vice* Dymond ; Mansour *vice* Hankó ; Metcalf *vice* Peters ; Riley *vice* Calman ; Rode ; Spärck *vice* Mortensen ; van Straelen *vice* Richter ; Usinger *vice* Vokes.

9. The Ruling given in the present *Opinion* was dissented from by no Commissioner or Alternate Commissioner present at the Paris Session.

10. At the time of the adoption of the Ruling given in the present *Opinion*, the expression prescribed for the second portion of the binomen which constitutes the scientific name of a species was the expression "trivial name" and the *Official List* reserved for recording such names was styled the *Official List of Specific Trivial Names in Zoology*, the word "trivial" appearing also in the title of the Official Index reserved for recording rejected and invalid names of this category. Under a decision taken by the fourteenth International Congress of Zoology, Copenhagen, 1953, the expression "specific name" was substituted for the expression "trivial name" and corresponding changes were made in the titles of the *Official List* and *Official Index* of such names (1953, *Copenhagen Decisions zool. Nomencl.* : 21). The changes in terminology so adopted have been incorporated in the Ruling given in the present *Opinion*.

11. The prescribed procedures were duly complied with by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature in dealing with the present case, and the present *Opinion* is accordingly hereby rendered in the name of the said International Commission by the under-signed Francis Hemming, Secretary to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, in virtue of all and every the powers conferred upon him in that behalf.

12. The present *Opinion* shall be known as *Opinion* Two Hundred and Sixty-Five (265) of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature.

DONE in London, this Fifth day of January, Nineteen Hundred and Fifty-Four.

*Secretary to the International Commission
on Zoological Nomenclature*

FRANCIS HEMMING